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10 December 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with Les Aspin, Member of the
House Select Committee

As a follow-on to a chance social encounter, Mr. Aspin invited me to lunch. The lunch followed the 10 December 1975 hearing on covert action, at which Roger Fisher, McGeorge Bundy and Nicholas Katzenbach had spoken.

Most of our conversation dealt with covert action, and how to control it. I said that there was already a trend toward fewer and better covert actions which I felt should be continued. I added that I felt one should "never say never" about covert action in the future, and that I thus disagreed with what Professor Fisher had said.

Aspin asked for comments or suggestions on future covert actions. I said that during the approval process for any specific operation, attention might well be paid to the ending of the action, as well as to its genesis. Past experience has shown, I suggested, that often a covert action can be harder to stop than to start, as foreign clients become dependent upon what is supplied them. Aspin and his staffer, Warren Nelson, both noted this down. The rest of the conversation broke no new ground.

Aspin said that his attitude toward CIA had not changed much during the HSC investigation. He characterized it as "mixed". He favors intelligence collection and improved analysis, but advocates a very restrictive covert action charter.

I asked about rumors that the HSC might extend its investigation. Aspin said that it would finish on schedule as far as CIA and foreign operations are concerned. He added that members

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with a strong interest in domestic matters, including Mr. Dellums and Mr. Murphy, have been suggesting that the HSC continue on for two or three months in order to investigate the FBI and IRS more fully. Mr. Aspin was quite positive in stating that the investigation of CIA would finish on schedule. The lunch ended amicably on this note.

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